

Nebraska Radio Network

TransCanada must start over if Keystone XL is to be built

January 18, 2012 By Brent Martin

The State Department denied TransCanada a permit for Keystone XL, stating it did not have time to fully evaluate proposals for a new route around the Sand Hills of Nebraska. Congress imposed a February 21st deadline for President Obama to reach a decision on Keystone in the compromise legislation approved at the end of the year to extend the payroll tax cut.

Assistant Secretary of State Kerri-Ann Jones told reporters in a conference call that deadline didn't give the State Department adequate time. It recommended the president deny the permit. President Obama accepted its recommendation.

The project isn't dead, however. Jones noted that TransCanada can reapply, though that means the company must begin the application process anew.

"If TransCanada comes in with a new application, it will trigger a new review process, a completely new review process," according to Jones.

That assurance means nothing, according to Sen. Mike Johanns, who tells Nebraska Radio Network TransCanada could always reapply. Johanns says he's very disappointed in the administration's decision. He says it seemed at one time that the State Department was on the verge of approving Keystone, but this latest decision puts its eventual approval in doubt.

"You just never know. They can be awfully unpredictable in the White House," Johanns says.

Congressman Lee Terry, in a news conference called by House Republicans in Washington, expressed disappointment in the decision, but resolve in seeing the project through.

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